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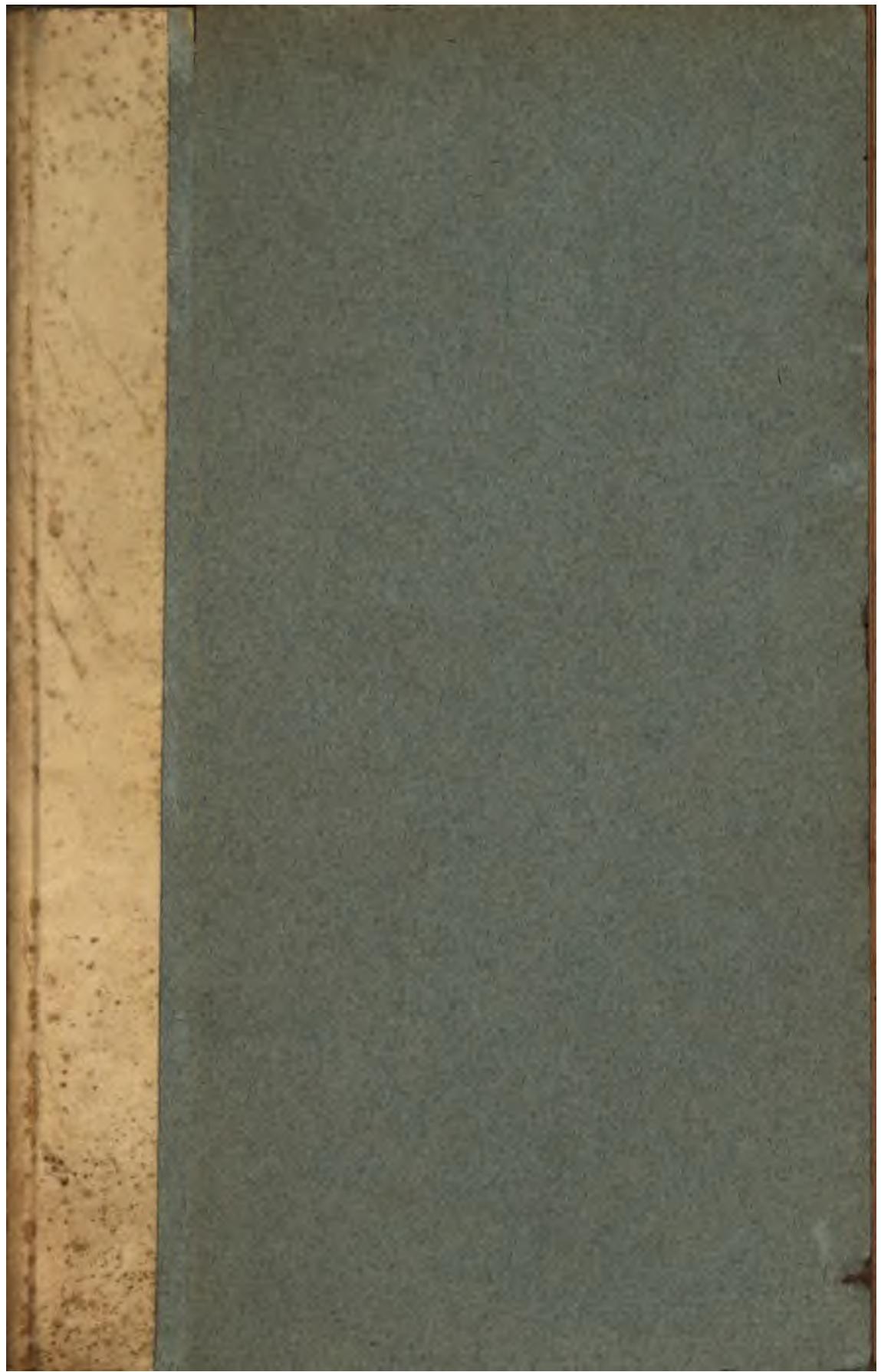
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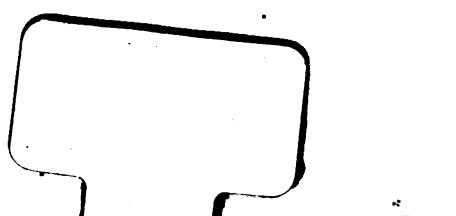
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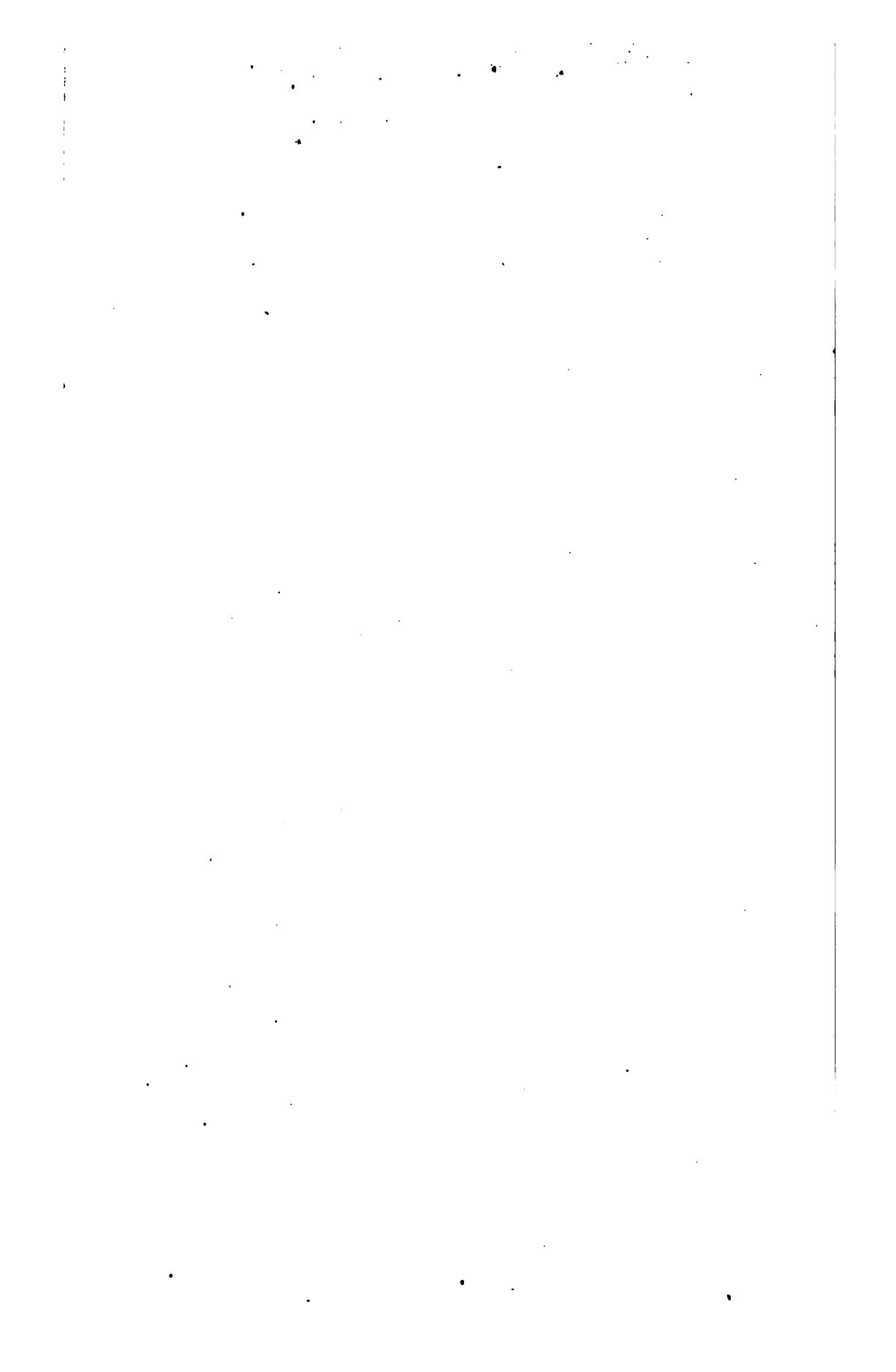
INGS

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1884.



EMENDATIONS AND RENDERINGS

OF PASSAGES IN

THE POETICAL WORKS

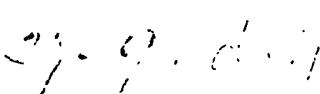
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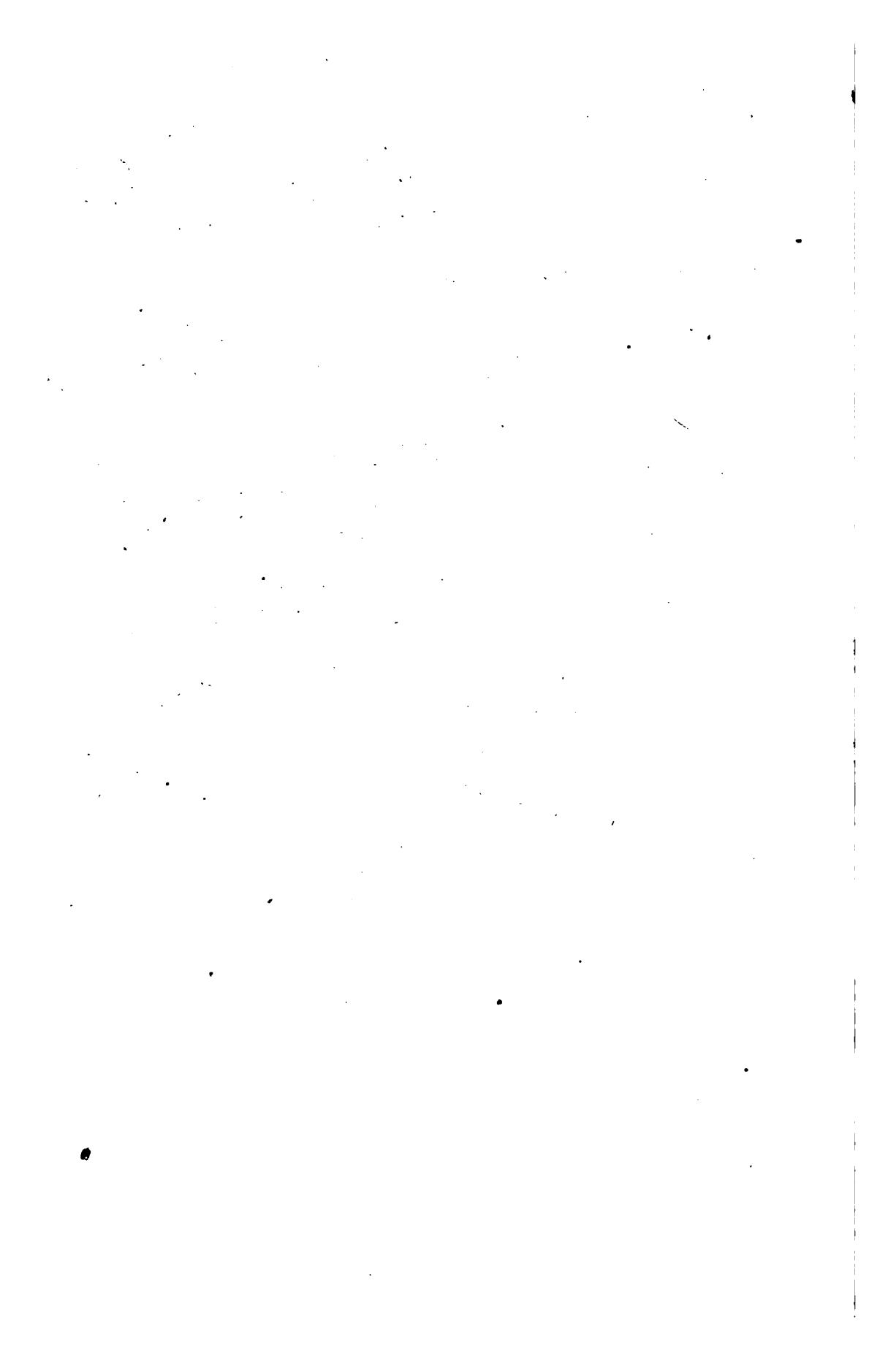
JOHN MILTON.

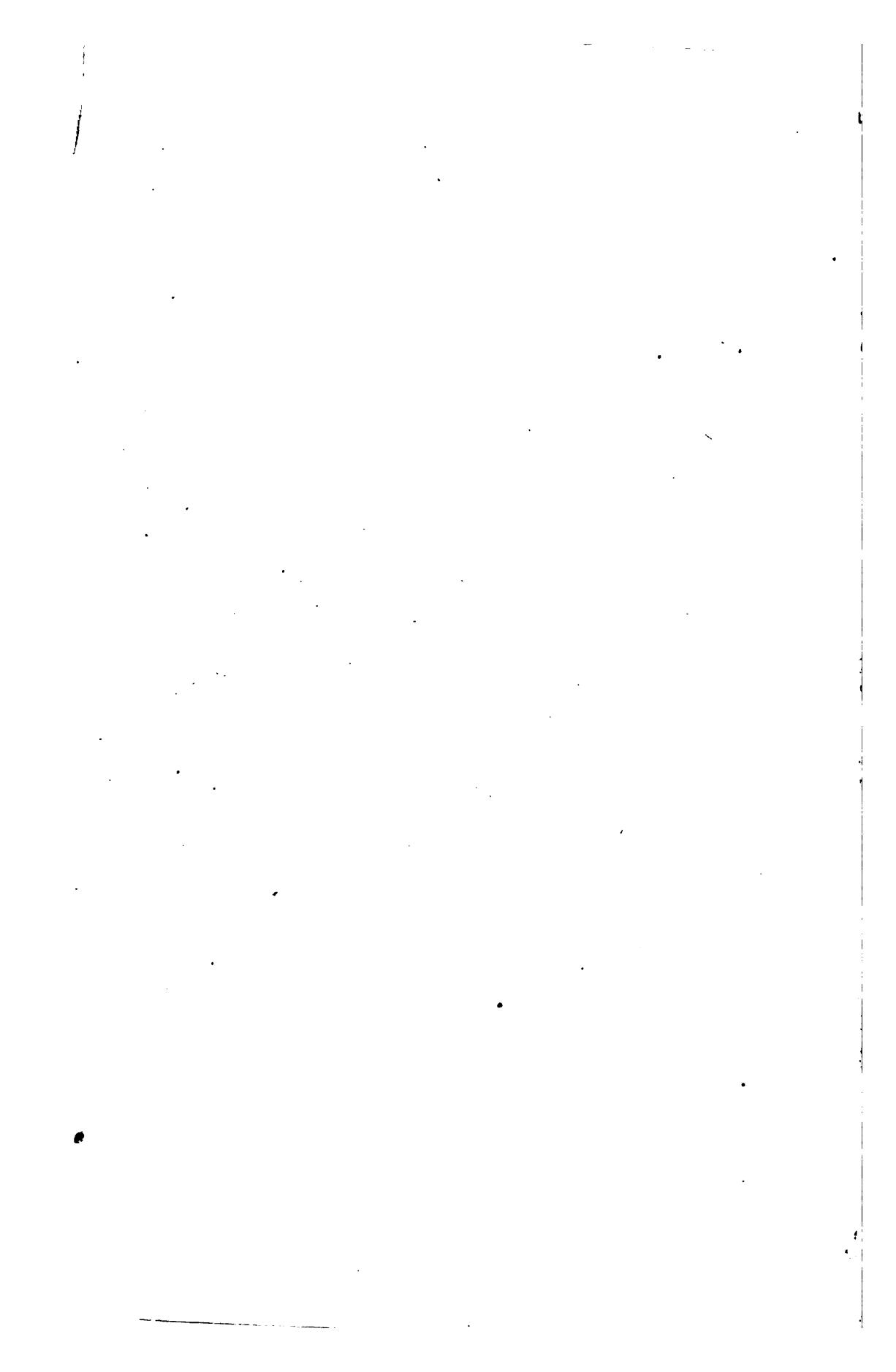
*"Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea,
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free."*

KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & Co.,
1, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, LONDON.

1884.







INGS

13, Fritville Jidens
Whipple Road,
April 29.

S

Dear Sir,

I have posted to you
a copy of my Ex-
actions of Milton's
text, and should they
be deemed worthy of

N.



With such thoughts
Lodged in his breast, as well might recommend
Such solitude before choicest society.

Paradise Regained, Book i.

Amplitude of mind to greatest deeds.—*Id.*

Thy words with grace divine
Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety.

Paradise Lost, Book viii.

Musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns.—*Comus*.

Eternal numbers to outlive long dates.

Shakespeare, Sonnet 38.

The proud full sail of his great verse.

Id., Sonnet 86.

The following Emendations and Renderings are submitted to the judgment of others, for approval or rejection. I wish to state, however, that it is my reverence for Milton—for his lofty genius and elevated character—that has induced me to point out in print what seem to me to be undoubted errors or misinterpretations, which mar or pervert the sense of his true text. The errors appear to have arisen from the oversight of respective editors, or the absence of due appreciation of Milton's meaning.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Vaughan, in his recent edition of Milton's "Paradise Lost," remarks, "Milton's blindness, when the greater part of his poetry was written and published, must have been very unfavorable to strict accuracy. There are passages in which words seem to have been misunderstood by his amanuensis or by the printer; and in regard to punctuation he must have been especially dependent upon others." Dr. Vaughan adds, "In this last respect, more effort has been made than will be generally understood, in the hope of rendering this edition such as the poet must have desired." As all the errors pointed out by me in the subsequent pages are unfortunately to be found in Dr. Vaughan's edition, the effort that was laudably made to render it so perfect, even as the poet must have desired, was not entirely successful. For England's great Epic to be blurred and blotted, is as though some fair creation of Nature had been despoiled of its beauty.

Besides the special object above designed, I have remarked upon a few other matters Miltonic, which I think may possess some interest.

M. MULL.

13, FRITHVILLE GARDENS,
UXBRIDGE ROAD, W.

April, 1884.



Then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
Address, and to begirt the Almighty throne
Beseeching or besieging.

Paradise Lost, Book v.

Here is surely a mutilation, which has run through all the editions, in the substitution of a word, besides the intrusion of a nugatory comma and the omission of a needful one. My corrections, which I believe to be restorations, would make the passage read thus :—

Then thou shalt behold
Whether by supplication we intend
[To] address or to begirt the Almighty throne,
Beseeching or besieging.

It must be obvious that Satan could not mean that he would both address and begirt the throne of the Almighty at one and the same moment, as he is made to do in the usual reading ; indeed, the fine antithetical line, "beseeching or besieging," plainly embodies and repeats the intention, as I render it, expressed in the previous line. I need hardly draw attention to the altered punctuation.



It is distressing, to a lover of Milton's poetry, to find so grand a passage as the following deformed and mutilated by the vicious punctuation that has been imposed upon it, and accepted by successive editors even of the best and most highly-reputed editions.

Belial is discussing with the chiefs of the revolted angels the policy of renewing the war to recover heaven, and submits whether their present state and condition do not supply adequate reasons for remaining quiescent, though not reconciled to their miserable fate; and he reminds them of their recent overthrow, accompanied as it was with so much dismay and appalling sufferings, as well as their dread of the pursuing vengeance of the Almighty. The passage in which he displays his argument, and which is so vitiated as I have stated, is this, but which I present with my renovated punctuation :—

" Wherefore cease we, then ? "

Say they who counsel war. " We are decreed,
" Reserved, and destined to eternal woe.
" Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
" What can we suffer worse ? " Is this then worst,
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms ?
What ! When we fled amain, pursued and struck
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The deep to shelter us, this Hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds ; — or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake, that sure was worse.

Paradise Lost, Book ii,

Is not this resplendent with force and fervour, and " musical as is Apollo's lute "? Compare it with the erroneous printing of the editions, which I present here :—

Wherefore cease we then ?
Say they who counsel war : We are decree'd,
Reserved, and destined to eternal woe ;
Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
What can we suffer worse ? Is this then worst,
Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms ?
What ! when we fled amain, pursued and struck
With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
The deep to shelter us ? This Hell then seemed
A refuge from those wounds, or when we lay
Chained on the burning lake. That sure was worse.

Mutilation of the punctuation is well-nigh as mischievous as mutilation of a text.

His altar breathes
Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,
Our servile offerings.

Paradise Lost, Book ii.

Here is a palpable obscurity, which Bentley evidently felt, as he suggested to read *from* "ambrosial flowers." The editor of the Clarendon edition, while calling attention to this suggestion, properly sets it aside ; but what I think is the real error, has escaped both annotators. The former would do violence to the text, but my emendation would simply transfer the comma ; then the reading would be this :—

His altar breathes
Ambrosial odours, and ambrosial flowers
[Are] our servile offerings.

Thus, while ambrosial odours breathe from His altar, ambrosial flowers "are" our servile offerings. The obscurity about these lines is thus removed, smoothness and sense are recovered, and a restoration, as I think, is happily made.

The following parallel passage in *Samson Agonistes* lends some confirmation to my suggestion :—

"my tomb
With odours visited, and annual flowers."



The following lines are characterized by great dramatic power, the emotions of distraction and agitation being vividly exhibited. No such passage, I believe—displaying these moving dramatic elements so powerfully—can be found in any other part of Milton's poetical works; yet it is, in all the editions, completely hidden from the general apprehension, and even commentators pass it by in silence or characterize it as veiled in “considerable confusion,” because, as I will endeavour to show, of the perverse and false punctuation. I here give it with the altered and what I think necessary changes :—

If thou beest he—but O, how fallen! how changed
From him who in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst [did?] outshine
Myriads though bright!—if [thou beest] he whom mutual league

* * * * *
Joined [thee] with me once, now misery hath joined [us]
In equal ruin!—into what thou seest!
From what height fallen! So much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then, who knew
The force of those dire arms?

Paradise Lost, Book i.

The annotator of an excellent edition published by Messrs. Longmans & Co., for colleges and higher schools, has so missed the dramatic element and the passion which pervade the whole passage, that no other alternative presents itself to him but to blankly charge upon Milton the writing of what he says is “considerable confusion,” which designation he specially applies to the first three lines; and he charges upon the following three lines “more confusion.” He says, “We might, to be sure, understand ‘If thou beest’ he ‘whom mutual league,’ but then the verb ‘hath joined’ is without an object.” We must understand it so, to understand it at all; and if there really be no “object,” then, doubtless, the dramatic fervour and passion of the whole address is for that very reason vastly exalted. He must have strangely overlooked the form of speech known as *Aposeopesis*, by which the speaker breaks off, through some affection or vehemency, before the subject is concluded. This, in my opinion, is the explanation to be applied here; though it might plausibly be shown that an object could be found in the sentence, “now misery hath joined in equal ruin.” The writer alluded to lost his way in the effort to unravel this fine passage, by blindly adhering, no doubt,

to the perverse and misleading punctuation—the serious defects of which will be clearly seen, as I reproduce it here, if it be compared with my alterations as presented above :—

If thou beest he ; but O, how fallen ! how changed
From him who in the happy realms of light,
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads though bright ! If he whom mutual league,

* * * * *
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin ; into what thou seest,
From what height fallen ; so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder : and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms ?

In the edition under the editorship of the Rev. Dr. Robert Vaughan, the punctuation of this passage in one material respect is more lame and rugged than is here embodied.

Before their eyes in sudden view appear
The secrets of the hoary deep; . . . where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
Of endless wars, *and by* confusion stand.
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring, &c., &c.

Paradise Lost, Book ii.

I put forth the following emendation of the above passage, asking for deliberate consideration of my restorations :—

where eldest Night
And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
Eternal anarchy. Amidst the noise
Of endless wars, *hard by* Confusion stands;
For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,
Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring, &c.

The changes I have made are (1) in the punctuation, of an important character, closing the first sentence at "anarchy," not at "stands."

(2) Altering "and by" to "hard by," of which phrase as used by Milton I present here the following examples :—

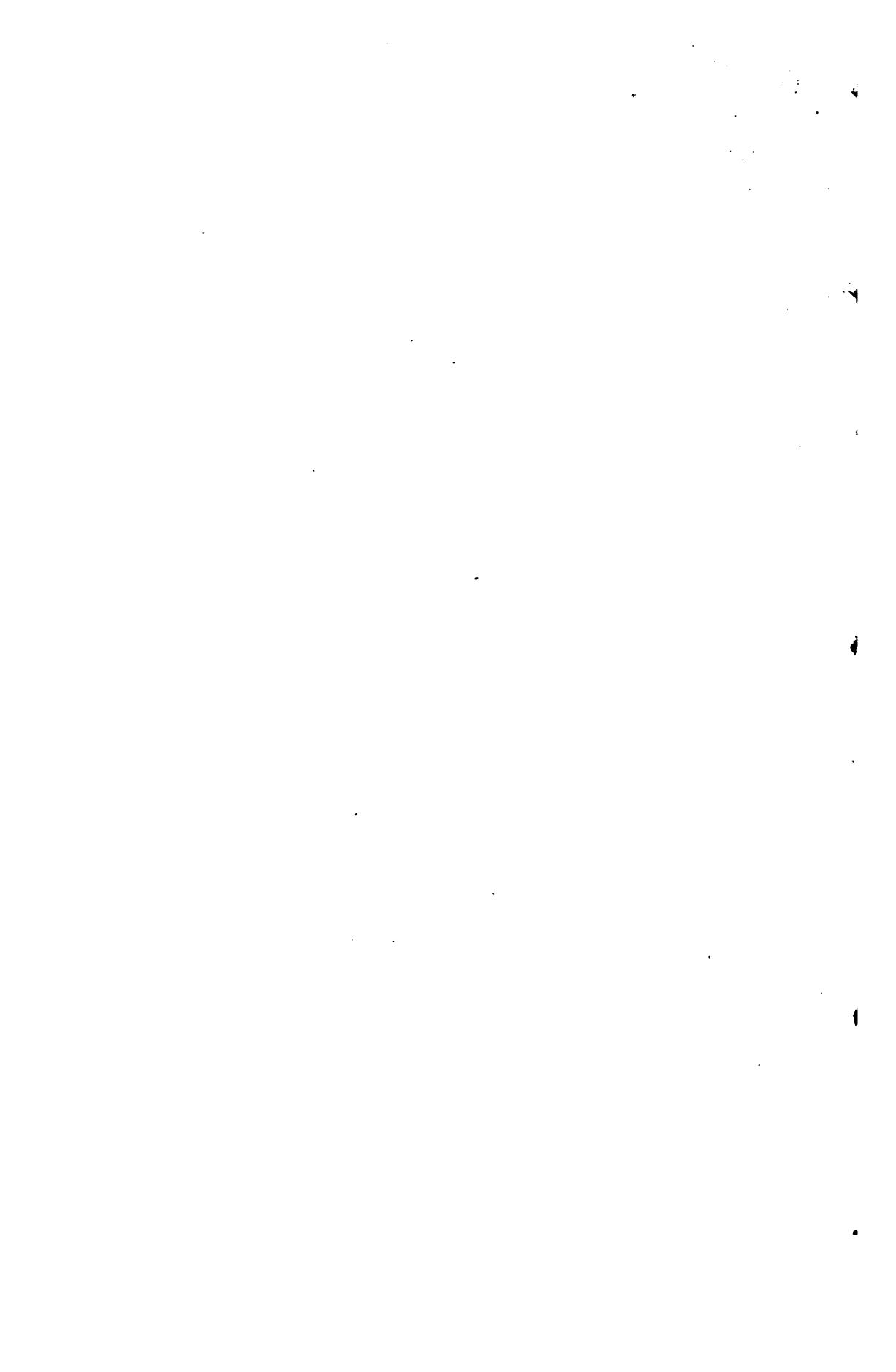
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes.—*L'Allegro*, line 81.
Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts.—*Comus*, line 531.
Of Moloch homicide—lust hard by hate.—*Par. Lost, Book i.*
There stood a grove hard by.—*Par. Lost, Book x.*

(3) I personify "Confusion"—a change which supplies the key to the true construction of the fresh sentence ; which makes it brilliantly luminous, which supplies further dignity to it, and which certainly harmonises admirably with the personifications of "Night" and "Chaos"—thus forming a trio of elemental "Chimæras dire."*

I need hardly point out the evident correspondence and fitness of the two lines commencing the new sentence as I have arranged it, with the two lines which immediately follow. Further, as the punctuation stands in all the editions, there appears to be a reduplication, a redundancy, in the expression "Of endless wars," of the idea conveyed in "Eternal anarchy," which weakens the grand roll of the language describing the scene, and destroys the cadence which should be made manifest on the two latter words. But by my change the apparent redundancy is converted into a welcome repetition of the same impressive strain.

It is in connection with such a passage as the above, and my suggested emendations, that I would especially call attention to Dr. Vaughan's remarks quoted by me *ante*.

* It is not necessary here to give instances in which Milton has personified "Confusion."



Each stair mysteriously was *meant*, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes
Viewless.

Paradise Lost, Book iii.

Here is an evident blunder, destroying all sense. Substitute *dropt*—a word that fulfils the idea of mysteriousness, and corresponds completely with the operation described in the next line. My suggestion also finds confirmation in the subsequent lines :—

Who after came from Earth, sailing arrived,
The stairs were then let down.

As to the punctuation, this passage throughout is a mass of confusion, “a tangled skein,” which no editor has attempted to unravel. Whether I have succeeded or not must be left to others to say. It must be admitted that it is a most complicated passage, and somewhat rugged besides. I give it with my alterations, leaving the reader to compare them with the confusion that prevails in every edition :—

Each stair mysteriously was *dropt*, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes
Viewless. And underneath a bright sea flowed
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from Earth, sailing arrived,
Wafted by angels, or [he who] flew o'er the lake
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds,
The stairs were then let down.

At this point I conclude this sentence, for obviously “the stairs were let down” for him “who came from Earth,” not for Satan, as it is made to appear in the erroneous punctuation.

Whether to dare
The Fiend by easy ascent, or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss,
(Direct against which opened from beneath,
Just o'er the blissful seat of Paradise,
A passage down to th' Earth—a passage wide,
Wider by far than that of after-times
Over Mount Sion, and (though that were large)
Over the Promised Land (to God so dear),
By which—to visit oft those happy tribes
On high behests—His Angels to and fro
Passed frequent (and His eye with choice regard),
From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood,
To Beersaba, where the Holy Land
Borders on Egypt and th' Arabian shore,—
So wide the opening seemed, where bounds were set
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave,)
Satan from hence, now on the lower stair,
That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view
Of all this world at once.

With gifts and graces eminently adorned
To [accomplish] some great work, thy glory.

Samson Agonistes.

In many editions a comma is placed at the end of the first line, which entirely obstructs the flow of the true sense, and to the loss of the more elevated meaning intended by Milton. Milton sometimes used English words in their Latin meaning, and this he does in the word "adorned." "Eminently furnished to do some great work," is plainly a happier and far superior reading to that which is erroneously accepted.

Of painful superstition and blind zeal.—*Par. Lost*, Book iii.

The word "painful" is erroneously accepted by commentators in the sense of spontaneously incurring pain, and also as implying the suffering of pain at the hands of others arising out of fanatical or superstitious beliefs. But it has escaped notice that in Milton's time the word "painful" was used sometimes in the sense of *arduous, striving*; and it undoubtedly is so used here. Shakespeare, in one of his Sonnets, says—

The painful [arduous] warrior famous'd for fight.

And in "Love's Labours Lost,"

Till painful study shall outwear three years.

The sense I give of the word, too, more appropriately corresponds with the remainder of Milton's line than the accepted sense. Those who are influenced by the delusions and impulses of superstition, notoriously strive after and arduously endeavour to attain certain ends, or accomplish some difficult enterprise.



Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold.

Paradise Lost, Book ii.

An able commentator has the following note on this line :—“The adjective *barbaric* might apply either to the word going before or to that coming after it; but several reasons lead me to say that it is meant to qualify ‘pearl and gold.’ In the first place, ‘barbaric gold’ is a classical phrase; secondly we know that it was an Eastern ceremony, ‘at the coronation of Kings, to powder them with gold-dust and seed-pearl; and last of all, if my ear does not deceive me, the cæsura, or metrical break in the verse, falls more naturally after ‘kings’ than after ‘barbaric’.”

I venture, with some diffidence, to contest these reasons. Taking the second reason, I think an opposite conclusion should be drawn from it to that implied, rather than stated, by the commentator. The *custom* referred to, Milton surely would consider barbaric, not the *substances* which were used to dignify or bespangle great personages; therefore “kings barbaric” would mean that they were the objects of barbaric customs. As to the metrical break, that, I think, is quite as welcome to the ear after “barbaric,” especially as, to my mind, the fitness of the adjective to “kings” recommends itself so strongly. With regard to “barbaric gold” being a classical phrase, should that have force sufficient to interdict a rendering which is much more worthy of acceptance? In Europe we do not attach the idea of barbaric to the precious metals, or to precious stones, or to resplendent pearls; why, then, should we so perversely describe them when they are displayed in the East?



For eloquence the soul : song charms the sense.

Paradise Lost, Book ii.

It has been said that Milton always excels in describing music ; but here he would seem to limit its charm to its sensuousness only, which is impossible for him to have intended. Considering what rapturous delight he experienced from his own knowledge of the art, and also the fervent language he uses elsewhere when referring to it, he can mean no such inconsistency. With some, music charms only their sense ; with Milton it certainly furnished the highest intellectual felicity as well as charmed his sense. He has indicated, too, that he was familiar with the profoundest class of musical form, which more than any other requires a cultivated intellect to trace and grasp it, viz. that of the fugue ; he says,

Was heard the Organ, and who moved
Its stops and chords was seen—his volant touch,
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.

Milton's intellect comprehended the character of the intricate fugue—little as it was developed in his day—which, besides charming the sense of hearing, engages the highest faculties in following and comprehending.

Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise.—*Lycidas*.

In service high and anthems clear.—*Il Penseroso*.

He that has light within his own clear breast.—*Comus*.

In the first instance, "clear" is used as meaning *noble, sterling* (from *clarus*, noble, of renown). In the second instance it conveys the sense of *grand, sublime*. The meaning in the last quotation is, *pure* combined with *noble*.

As an instance of Shakespeare's use of the word, may be quoted :

"Persevere in that *clear* way thou goest."—*Pericles*, Act iv. Scene vi.

Again, in "King John," Act iii. Scene iv. :—

"How much King John hath lost
In this which he accounts so *clearly* won."

And in "Macbeth," Act i. Scene vii. :—

"Duncan hath been
So *clear* in his great office."



In 1643 the two Houses of Parliament assigned Judge Hale as counsel for Archbishop Laud. It was on the issue of this trial that Milton, when he wrote thus before it took pace, proved himself a prophet as well as a poet :—

The grim wolf, with privy paw,
Daily devours apace and nothing said :
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to strike once and smite no more.

Lycidas (written in 1637.)

Nor wanted of labouring pioneers
A multitude, with spades and axes armed
To lay hills plane, fell woods, or valleys fill ;
Or where plane was raise hill, or overlay
With bridges rivers proud as with a yoke.

Paradise Regained, Book iii.

These lines always seemed to me to contain a precise and admirable description of the process of constructing a railroad. “The *level* road, the very form of the railway, was Stephenson’s main idea,” says *Nature*, June 9th, 1881.

To morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.—*Lycidas*.

The misquotation, in the substitution of *fields* for *woods*, seems an inveterate blunder in much of our literature and often in newspapers.

For so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts daily with *false* surmise.—*Lycidas*.

To obtain a little ease, let us indulge in factitious suppositions, or conceits, or illusions.

Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere.—*Lycidas*.

If once His wrath take fire, like fuel sere.

Translation of Psalm ii.

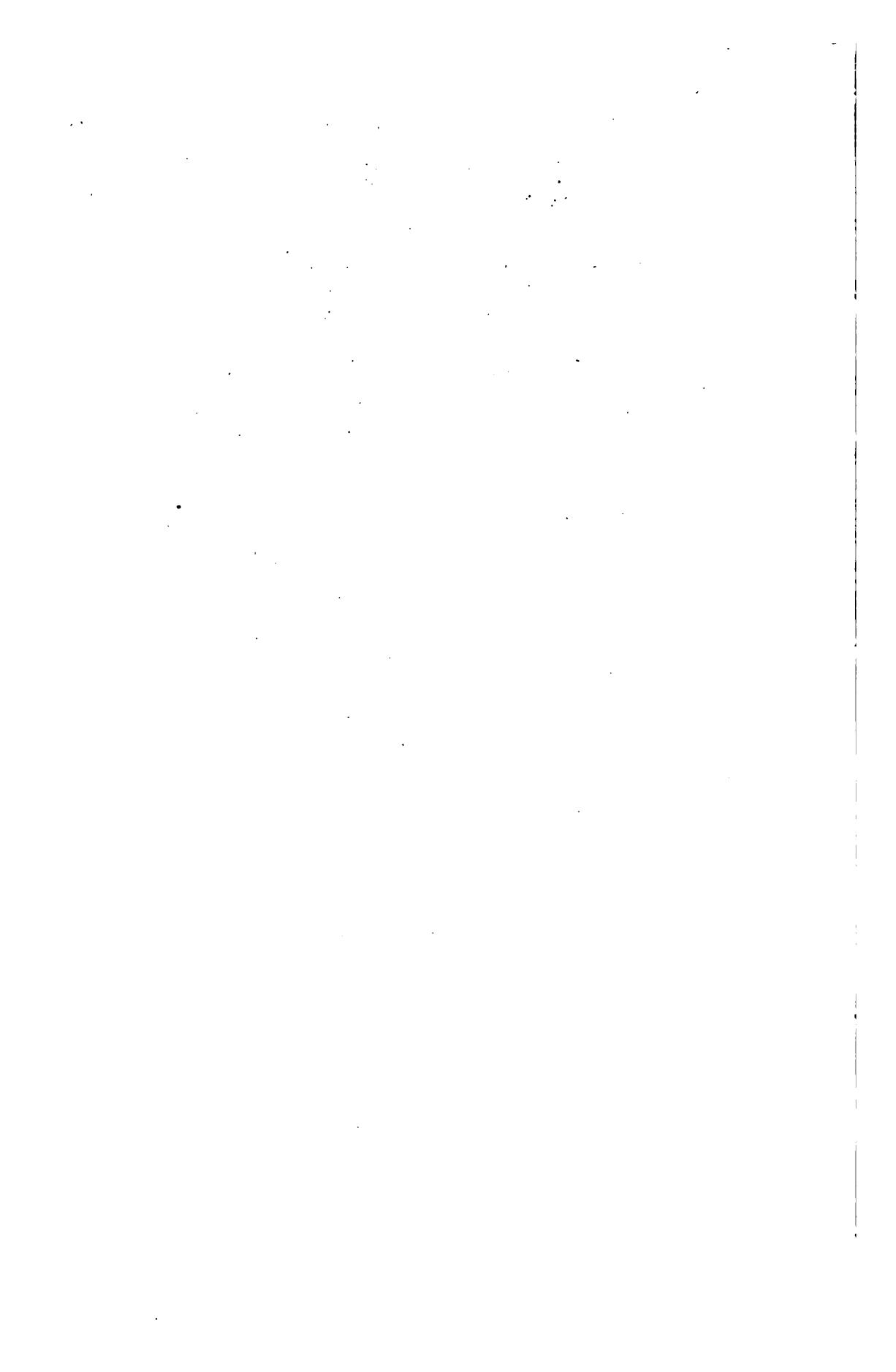
The word “sere,” in the first line, has the meaning of *yellow*; in the second instance, that of *dry*.



SONG ON MAY MORNING.

Milton's "Song on May Morning" possesses such inexpressible beauty that it deserves to be a "household word" in every home wherever the English language is spoken. Why have not the boys and girls in every school in the land this song set as a pleasure task to recite on every May the first? It should be a National May-day Song. I reproduce it here :—

Now the bright Morning-star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the East, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose.
Hail, bounteous May, that dost inspire
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire!
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing!
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.

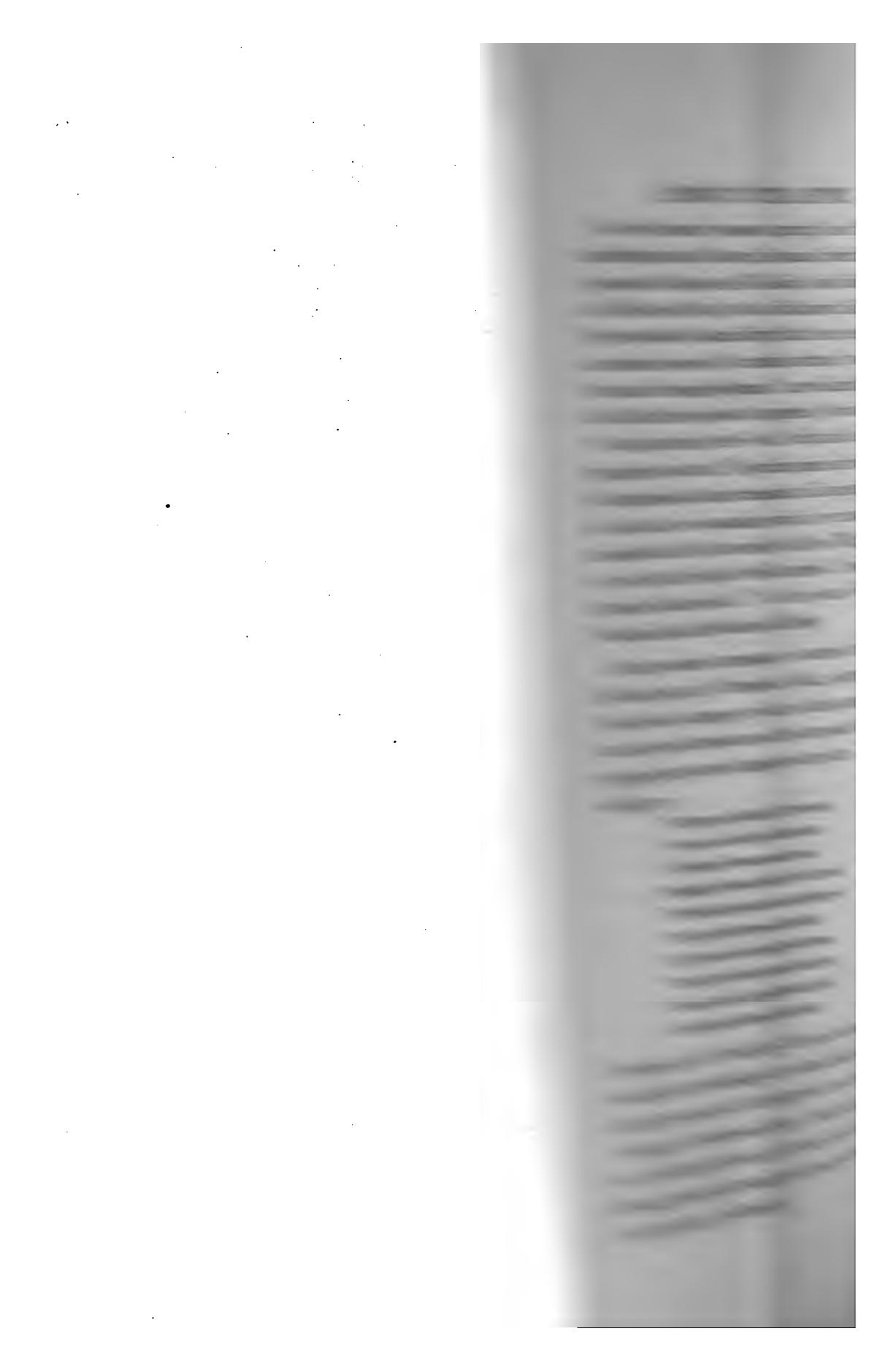


MILTON'S "AUSTERITY" A MYTH.

Milton's Minor Poems (London : Central School Depot).—The little book containing these Poems (*L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Lycidas*) is one of the series of Laurie's class-books. The notes are all lucid and highly informing to the student or general reader ; the Biographical Note, too, as well as the Introduction to each poem, are highly appreciative of these exquisite productions, as well as of the poet himself. I notice that the editor, following a popular error, speaks of Milton's "austerity" as though his temperament were of a somewhat grim or doleful character. The poet, happily, is in these days emerging from a cloud of misapprehension on several points which have created a mist of prejudice which has too long been allowed to obscure his pre-eminent claims to the reverence of Englishmen and the whole world. Professor J. R. Seeley has brushed aside, in an effectual manner, the prevailing notion of Milton's austerity—or, rather, the Professor has determined the true nature of the great poet's disposition. "Milton's austerity," he says, "was not that of monks but of heroes ; he had a temperament "of uniform gladness, incapable of depression." And another eminent writer also says, "The vision that rises before us as we think of the "blind poet musing on his mighty theme, of listening to the oracles of "God, to the verse of Euripides, Dante, or Spenser, or accompanying "with song the thrilling music of the Organ (on which instrument he "was a skilled player), is not that of a soured and disappointed poli- "tician, but of a seraphic bard, who drinks liberally of sweet and solemn "joys from the perennial founts of his own genius." Wordsworth's Sonnet on Milton ought of itself to be sufficient to demolish the impression which still finds currency about this side of the poet's temperament. A couplet in this Sonnet embodies the real truth :—

So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness.

Milton's austerity is a myth, and is now exploded by better information, which is revealing a bright and serene nature, noble in its aims and of the purest character. Dr. Johnson's reckless assertions about Milton and the treatment of his poetry, for long thoughtlessly accepted, are now condemned by all writers as they deserve to be ; a most competent critic, indeed, has just said, "There is certainly no modern writer with "any regard for his reputation who would dare to publish the hasty "opinions and slovenly statements of fact which disfigure Johnson's "Lives of the Poets." The Poems above referred to ought to be more generally read and thoroughly mastered than is done.



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A PRODIGY IN NATURAL HISTORY.

I have the pleasure to possess an engraving of one of the most remarkable productions of Nature, in the domain of arboriculture. It is a specimen of the banyan tree (*Ficus Indica*), whose *habitat* is India, and, I believe, solely there ; but it is so little known in this hemisphere (except to students of natural history), that the mere mention of its name awakens no sense of its marvellous structure, its vast circumference, and its amazing development. It may with admirable fitness be said of it, that it must be seen to be appreciated. *Quot rami tot arbores*, “as many branches as trees”—but all vitally united, and originally springing from one trunk. The particular specimen under notice is by far the grandest and the most transcendant of all its compeers. And it has, besides its own commanding merits, the ever memorable fact associated with it, that it was visited by the Duke of Wellington about the year 1804, at the sight of which he exclaimed, “I could encamp a regiment of soldiers under it.” It is in the province of Guzerat, in Western India, about 200 miles north of Bombay.

Another remarkable circumstance to be mentioned here is, that Milton has given, in his “Paradise Lost,” Book ix., a description of the *Ficus Indica*, in language so vivid, and in detail so precise and particular, that such information as could then have reached him of this prodigy must have struck his imagination with great force. This is his description :—

The fig tree, not that kind of fruit renowned,
But such as at this day to Indians known,
In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms,
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother tree—a pillared shade
High over-arched and echoing walls between :
There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
At loop-holes cut through thickest shade.

Milton speaks of the “bended twigs,” but they must be understood as extended limbs, wide-stretching so far as to astonish the beholder. The poetical representation, that “daughters grow about the mother tree,” is charming in its exactness and its beauty. It should be stated, however, in elucidation, that from each of these many limbs shoot forth, depending, branches that eventually reach the ground, and take root, so that they become “a pillared shade.”



